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Current Thought & Incident.

Conscience and its Mission.

Mankind is possessed of an ethical nature. Instinctively it is felt that some things are right and some are wrong. "Thou shalt" and "Thou shalt not" is whispered to us in no uncertain tone. Thus conscience speaks as an imperative that demands obedience, and awakens the feeling "I ought" or "I ought not." Such a feeling is the evidence of carnal opposition to law. A perfect harmony between the creature and the Creator would abolish the necessity of the warnings of conscience but in the light of man's conflicting desires and tendencies it comes forward, as Bishop Butler says, as "the guide assigned us by the author of our being" to direct in the way of life.

As the judge determines the merits of the case and renders his decision in accordance with the evidence, so conscience determines the excellence or depravity of an action. The deed itself is not made virtuous or vicious by the decision, but its character is unmasked. The sense of touch may reveal whether a body is smooth or rough, square or circular, large or small, but the touch does not change the object. The eye may perceive the color of a beautiful flower and classify it according to its exact shade, but the flower itself is altered not one whit. Likewise conscience comes as the spiritual revelator giving a definite vision of that which may be proposed, so that the subsequent act of an individual is meritorious or subject to condemnation, but the inciting cause remains in character unchanged. The mere possession of a live, energetic conscience does not make its possessor virtuous. The subject becomes righteous not by distinguishing between good and evil, but by choosing the good and avoiding the evil. The little monitor that is within, like the bell buoy of the deep, sounds the alarm of danger and reiterates its warning with unfailing regularity, but, save as by its persuasion, man yields to its dictate it availeth naught.

Conscience thus implies an obligation to the fulfillment of law. Ought conveys the idea of right. What makes it right? The eternal fiat of God. The great lawgiver has given his laws in righteousness and love. Their enforcement in the lives of men is the way to glory. "The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord" and is the il-

lumination of God's purposes. The world's relationship to the Creator makes it subject and the voice that speaks within is the word of direction. Herein is found the reason why conscience speaks not as a counsellor, but as an imperative. Not in the tones of advice, but in the language of command. Not as a revelation of privilege, but as the call to duty. Heeded, listened to, obeyed, the earth-born as brought back to allegiance to God and Jesus Christ, and a purer life opens the way for a larger soul.

When the candle is dimmed by reason of neglect, or the light fails because it is hidden, or the brightness is obscured by a perverse heart and an obstinate life, conscience fails in its mission. When misrepresentations are presented demanding a decision; when we seek to satisfy the demands by partial submission; when we spurn the warnings and go on the way of sin unmindful, that which would be a helper becomes a hindrance. A blunted and perverted conscience is as the blind leading the blind. The sign-board that points in the wrong direction is the bane of the traveler, likewise the conscience that gives the wrong command becomes a menace. It needs to be kept true to the plummet by intercourse with God and familiarity with His revelation. Its guidance constantly sought stimulates it to activity. Its mandates always obeyed quicken to the hearing of its slightest whisper. We need to guard well the regnant king that seeks to direct our ways, and the munificent blessings that attend the reign will redound in the purer, holier life.

The Presbyterian.

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On the First Step All the Others Depend.

When the suspension bridge over the Niagara River was to be erected, the question was, how to get the first cable over. With favoring wind, a kite was elevated, which alighted on the opposite shore. To its insignificant string a cord was attached, which was drawn over, then a rope, then a larger one, then a cable; finally the bridge was completed, connecting the United States with Canada.

"First across the gulf we cast
Kite-borne threads till lines are passed,
And habit builds the bridge at last."

Many years ago, Dr. Andrew Peabody preached a baccalaureate sermon, at Harvard College, on "The Will."

He said that we often excuse ourselves for our wrong deeds and words on the ground that temptation comes

to us suddenly; and that we act involuntarily, before we have time to rally our forces. He admitted this as a valid excuse for those particular acts and words; but said that the true responsibility lies farther back—that temptations are continually coming to us when we do have time to think; that, if we yield to these, we not only do wrong at once, but that we weakened the moral fiber so that we do wrong in other instances when we have no time to think; and that, if we resist temptation when we can resist, we are forming a habit of feeling and action which will, by and by, help us to do right unhesitatingly.

A man's entire life is spent writing his own biography. Beyond his control is the phonograph of the soul, which registers faithfully every thought however feeble; every act, however small; every sensation, however slight; every impulse, every aspiration, every ambition, every effort, every stimulus, on the cerebral tissue.

Usually that which a man calls fate is a web of his own weaving, from threads of his own spinning.—Success.

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Isabella Bird Bishop on Christian and non-Christian Law.

The systems of Government in the East are in the main absolutely atrocious. I should specify the Empires of Korea and Morocco, one a demon-worshipping country, and the other a Muhammadan country, as being the very worst; but speaking generally—excluding Japan—it may be said that Governments exist only as engines of rapacity and oppression, and are entirely given to making all the money they can out of the people; that officials are venal, corrupt, merciless, and the peasant, the industrious cultivator (and these people are industrious), and the artisan are regarded as the ultimate sponges to be squeezed by all above them. There is no security for property, no security for life, even, in many of these countries. The poor have no rights which people above them are bound to respect. Then law as might be expected from a Government which is only a rapacious engine, and an engine of the most barbarous oppression, is a system, of bribery; in nearly every country justice is unknown, law is spoken of, or the absence of it, as a commodity, like every other commodity, and which they are too poor to buy. That is law. And when one contrasts that law with what Christianity has done for law in this country, one gets a very serious lesson as to what is meant by leaving these peoples to themselves. We are justly

proud of the incorruptibility of our courts, of the justice of our laws, of their equality, that the poor man in the eye of the law will win his case, if it is a just one, as readily as the millionaire. It is a grand thing that we have, and it has been brought about surely, in great measure, by the permeation of this country with the Christian faith. But law is a horror and a terror to these people. Then one comes to see how wretched their social condition is; that the sanctities of home, as we understand them, are unknown; that the position of woman is the most piteous that can be conceived, and one comes to know that there are 500 millions of women without Christ, and that these can only be reached by women sent out by Christian countries, to seek to save them in their secluded homes. When one knows that there is no truth between man and man, that no man trusts any woman, that suspicion prevail, that espionage is universal, that no man dares speak his mind unless he is alone with you, then one finds throughout a sickness of the whole head and a faintness of the whole heart.

C. & M. Gazette.

This and That.

At the Chicago Congress of Religions in 1893, the Hindu monk Swami Vivekananda, a well-educated, eloquent man, addressing his audience, said: "The Hindu refuses to call you sinners: ye are the children of God, the sharers of immortal bliss, holy and perfect beings, ye are divinities on earth. Sinners! It is a sin to call a man so; it is a standing libel on human nature."

Swami contradicts some of the earlier literature. Take the following, which is, perhaps, 2000 years old:—

Forty sacraments are useless
To the man to passions given,
For they lead him not to Brahma,
Lead him not to Brahma's heaven,
Vain are Vedas without virtue,
Six Vedangas bring no rest;
Sacred learning leaves the sinner,
As the fledged bird quits nest.

Waymarkes.

Life Hints.

Find your purpose and fling your life out to it. Try to be somebody with all your might.

What is put into the first of life is put into the whole of life. Start right.

The first thing to do, if you have not done it, is to fall in love with your work.

Don't brood over the past nor dream of the future; but seize the instant and get your lesson from the hour.

Necessity is the priceless spur.

Give a youth resolution and the alphabet, and who shall place limits to his career?

Don't wait for extraordinary opportunities; seize common occasions and make them great.

A great opportunity will only make you ridiculous unless you are prepared for it.

The lucky man is who sees and grasps his opportunity the man.

The world always listens to a man with a will in him.

The man with an idea has ever changed the face of the world.

There is nothing small in a world where a mud creek swells to an Amazon, and a stealing of a penny may end on the scaffold.—Success.

A MAGNIFICENT FREEMAN.—Recognising that man is the brother of man, George Fox laboured to promote honesty and truthfulness between man and man. This led him to secure a fixity of price goods in the trades, a custom which is now established. This led to simplicity of speech in conversation. He argued for the abolition of the oath, for the reason that he would have every word uttered by man as true as an oath. That honesty and truthfulness might be made easy, he argued for an all-round simplicity of life and protested against extravagance and waste and vanity and idle luxury, and the senseless change of fashion. George Fox was a magnificent freeman, and he introduced into the world of thought and life that genius of liberty which was calculated to make every other man a freeman like himself.—*Dr. David Gregg.*

Mental Indigestion.

One of the Lenten preachers to City men offered some valuable suggestions, as he also passed some equally forcible strictures, upon the reading habits of the age. One of his criticisms was directed against the practice of an extensive but superficial reading of anything and everything that came from the press, the result of which he described in the phrase, "mental indigestion." It is a phrase worth considering, for it really explains a great deal. We are inclined to believe that much of the looseness of prevailing thought, and much of the scepticism and doubt that are abroad, are due to this vicious habit of rapid and scrapy reading. Men taste a little of every author, and such indiscriminate

feeding results in a jumble of ideas which the term "mental indigestion" happily describes. It is always the little knowledge that is a dangerous thing. Lord Bacon's word is as true now as when he first wrote it: "It is the half knowledge that removes from God—a full science conducts to Him." It will be a good thing when men have the courage to refuse to taste of every literary dish that is set before them; and to confine themselves to what will really feed the mental and moral life.

Personal work is the warp and woof of Christian activity; therefore this important element of service has the largest place in the extension of Christ's Kingdom, and every disciple of Jesus Christ is under obligation to engage in it. It does not necessarily involve the conversion of the person approached, but the attempt to win him, which is the ultimate object always in the mind of the worker. The work itself consists in directing the attention of men to Christ and with discretion urging them to accept the invitation of the Gospel and order their lives by its teaching.—S. M. Sayford.

If Christianity is a Life, it must begin with a birth; if a Journey, it cannot be taken unless we set out; if an Education, we must determine to commence the education; if Labor in God's vineyard, we must go into the vineyard and begin.—James Freeman Clarke.

DON'T SEEK AN EXCUSE.—The not excusing of ourselves is a perfect quality and of great merit. It is a mark of the deepest and truest humility to see ourselves condemned without cause, and to be silent under it. It is a very noble imitation of our Lord. What about being blamed by all men, if only we stand at the last blameless before Thee?

Theresa.

Live in a thankful spirit, and you will find more and more to be thankful for. Begin by resolving not to forget your mercies, and you will gradually come to feel the thought of them a constant inspiration of happiness.—Brooke Herford.

Such are Thy secrets, which my life makes good,
And comments on Thee; for in every thing
Thy words do find me out, and parallels bring,
And in another make me understood,
George Herbert.

Telegrams.

London, June 20.

Commandant De Wet, in a circular issued to his adjutants, says:—"You and I and every burgher can win the heart of the new Government our future conduct, of which I am not in the least doubtful."

Calcutta, June 21.

The *Englishman* has the following cablegram, dated London, June 19:—

It is estimated that the stands erected in the streets through which the procession will pass will provide seating accommodation for 90,000 people.

London, June 20.

It is understood that the Prince and Princess of Wales will defer their visit to India until after the Delhi Durbar.

London, June 20.

Lord Selborne has informed Mr. Richards that he had communicated with Admiral Bosanquet with the reference to the proposal to establish a training ship at Calcutta, and after consideration of his report he was unprepared to provide a ship out of naval funds.

London, June 22.

Owing partly to a certain discretion displayed in the official reports, which merely recorded the daily drives in a closed carriage every kind of sensational report has been circulated regarding the King's health. A positive official contradiction is now issued. The King returns to London to-morrow according to programme.

Calcutta, June 23.

A cablegram to the *Englishman* says.—Visitors are now pouring into London. The streets are now crowded with spectators viewing the decorations, which are fast approaching completion. The Canadian arch at Whitehall, which takes the form of an agricultural trophy, is among the most effective.

The unsettled weather is causing much anxiety. Some of the decorations are already bedraggled by rain.

London, June 21.

Lord Kitchener sails for England on Monday.

The *Times* in an article says that Lord Kitchener has not only bought a great war to a successful conclusion, but has also hammered a very defective army into a splendid fighting machine. While we have been talking about army reform Lord Kitchener has reformed the army.

All influential Germans in Johannesburg have formed a committee to participate in the coronation festivities, wishing to testify that the British flag means proposal freedom for everybody.

London, June 24.

An official statement says that the expenditure on the war in the Philippines hitherto is 34,000,000 sterling.

Allahabad, June 22.

The *Pioneer* learns that Fort Sandeman has been without an English mail for two succeeding weeks. The English mail due there on the 12th instant was looted beyond Harnai after leaving the railroad. The mail due there on the 19th has not yet

arrived. The letters of the looted mail have all been reported lost.

The mails for the Loralai garrison went by the same post as the Fort Sandeman mail.

Calcutta, June 22.

Lord Selborne's statement regarding the Hooghly training ship is not an end of the matter, as the promoters always had in mind the possibility of having to purchase a ship. Besides, it is believed that the Bengal Government is ready to help with money.

The Tsarewitch has arrived in the Thames in a yacht escorted by a Russian and an English cruiser.

Prince Henry of Prussia has arrived in an ironclad at Portsmouth.

Unofficial visitors are flocking to London in thousands. Traffic in the streets is increasingly congested and is a remarkable sight. The decorations in Piccadilly and St. James's, Pall Mall, are especially gorgeous. Forty lofty masts in St. James's Street represent the Colonies bearing shields with the Colonies' arms.

The route of the procession is practically encoased in timber. Every available foot, within buildings and without, has been utilised for stands. Whole lines of shops and offices are thus transformed beyond recognition. Trafalgar Square resembles a gigantic Colosseum.

The Indian Maharajas are charmed with the king's affability. Each of them has now had a separate audience of His Majesty.

It has been decided that Their Highnesses the Maharaja Scindia of Gwalior the Maharaja of Cooh Behar, and Sir Pertab Singh of Idar will ride abreast in the procession on Friday. The Maharajas of Kolhapur, Bikanir, Sikri and Kagal will go in carriages.

London, June 23.

Lord Milner assumed office as Governor of the Transvaal on the 21st June. The Chief Justice, Sir I. Rose-Innes, administered the oath to the Executive Council. The following were appointed:—Mr. Davidson, Colonial Secretary; Sir R. Solomon, Attorney General; Sir Godfrey Lagden, Commissioner, Native Affairs; Mr. Duncan, Colonial Treasurer; Mr. Wybergh, Commissioner of Mines.

Commandant Smuts with 176 Boers and 481 rebels surrendered in Western Cape Colony.

London, June 23.

The *Times*' Pekin correspondent says that Russia has withdrawn from foreign government at Tientsin, as she won't be a party to imposing on China the new condition drawn up by the allied commanders.

London, June 23.

The Chinese cruiser *Kaichi* was blown up by the magazine exploding near Nanking. One hundred and fifty men perished.

London, June 24.

The coronation is postponed indefinitely owing to the King's indisposition.

It is impossible to exaggerate the horror and stupefaction produced on the huge

holiday crowds by the appearance of the evening papers and posters announcing the illness and postponement.

The Bulletin issued says that an operation has been successfully performed. A large abscess has been evacuated. The King has borne the operation well, and is in a satisfactory condition.

It will be some days before it will be possible to say that the King is out of danger.

London, June 25.

Inquiry at the palace at 12.30 a. m. elicited the statement that the King had refreshing sleep and his strength is well maintained. There are no symptoms to cause anxiety.

London, June 25—7.30 p. m.

A bulletin issued states that the King passed a fairly comfortable day. His general strength has been well maintained, and there are no symptoms causing special anxiety.

London, June 26.

The eleven o'clock (evening) bulletin says that the King continues to satisfactorily progress. His Majesty slept some hours during the day, complains very little of discomfort, and is more cheerful. The wound is doing well.

NEWS AND NOTES.

Lieutenant-Colonel J. A. L. Montgomery, Commissioner of Rawalpindi, is appointed a member of the Punjab Legislative Council. The Hon'ble Mr. Tupper, C. S. I., is also reappointed to the Council.

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